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ABSTRACT

Because the issues of time, numbers, curriculum, and evaluation seem to confound effective mainstreaming at the secondary school level, they are the primary areas teachers must reassess in their own classrooms. Suggestions are made in this monograph about ways in which regular classroom teachers may cope effectively with handicapped students. A description is given of the characteristics of handicapped students frequently mainstreamed at the secondary level, including the educable mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, sensory handicapped, and physically disabled. The teachers' responsibilities in planning appropriate daily instruction and as members of the team that develops the Individualized Educational Plan are outlined. Ways in which curriculum may be adapted for mainstreamed students are also suggested. The problem of grading handicapped students is discussed with emphasis on ways in which evaluation criteria may be modified to fairly assess achievements. It is pointed out that cooperation between the regular classroom teacher and the special education teacher is vital to successful mainstreaming. (JD)

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Mainstreaming in the Secondary School: The Role of the Regular Teacher

Cynthia L. Warger, Loviah E. Aldinger, Kathy A. Okun

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By Cynthia L. Warger,
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and
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Introduction

Public law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (see fastback #124, *Mainstreaming: Merging Regular and Special Education*), has placed new demands on regular classroom teachers. Under P.L. 94-142 elementary and secondary teachers now share with special educators the instructional responsibility for handicapped students. Because of the nature of their professional preparation and their classroom settings, regular elementary teachers generally are already prepared to implement mainstreaming. However, at the secondary level definite obstacles exist that make it difficult for regular teachers to provide instruction to mainstreamed students.

Prior to 1975, public schools tended to exclude handicapped students from regular secondary classrooms. Many handicapped adolescents who had attended public elementary schools were simply encouraged to "drop-out" upon reaching the secondary level. Others were tracked into vocational programs. With the passage of P.L. 94-142, the secondary schools were suddenly charged with giving handicapped students a general education.

Since the special education model of instruction emphasizes individual student growth in small group settings, secondary teachers truly have their work cut out for them. The structure of secondary schools, where large groups of students move from classroom to classroom and from teacher to teacher, does not encourage the individualization of instruction. Secondary teachers, who see upwards of 150 students daily, also have few opportunities to meet the individual needs of mainstreamed handicapped students. The highly specialized course content

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at the secondary level, moreover, makes it difficult to accommodate students with widely varying abilities.

Faced with the need to comply in three years (by 1978) with the mandates of P.L. 94-142, secondary-school administrators began to mainstream handicapped students into regular classrooms with limited program options. There was little time to help the regular teachers improve their skills or to adapt their regular classroom structure. As mainstreaming has proceeded, regular classroom teachers have begun to address the very real problems of how to adapt group lessons, supplement textbook presentations, modify homework, and standardize grades to accommodate handicapped students.

What can regular secondary teachers do to foster academic success among mainstreamed handicapped adolescents? Our answer is, a lot, and often with only minor enhancements of their existing skills. Secondary teachers can plan appropriate instructional programs, they can modify existing curriculum materials, they can evaluate student progress, and they can make use of special education personnel when needed. This fastback will explore each of these facets of mainstreaming secondary students and will give practical suggestions for moving mainstreaming theory into practice in the secondary setting.

Obstacles to Mainstreaming at the Secondary Level

When asked what they teach, regular secondary teachers invariably respond with the title of their content area. While elementary teachers usually say, "second-graders," secondary teachers tend to say "English" or "Math" or "History." The distinction is important. Regular secondary teachers do tend to emphasize their subject more than they emphasize the needs of individual students; thus, they are sometimes criticized for being inflexible and unsympathetic to students' special needs.

No doubt the secondary setting is less hospitable to mainstreamed students than the elementary setting, but it is important to keep in mind that the *structure* of secondary schools sets inherent limits on what even the most sympathetic teachers can accomplish with their mainstreamed students. Secondary classrooms are traditionally organized to be cost effective—large numbers of students, rigid time schedules, and, recently, minimum competency requirements. The organizational structure imposes certain rigidity on the curriculum. Teachers respond to such rigidity with set curricula, standard presentations, and mass-administered exams.

P.L. 94-142 requires that schools provide students with an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. What determines an appropriate mainstream placement for a handicapped adolescent is not always defined, but some degree of individualization is clearly implied. Moreover, it is doubtful that the least restrictive environment policy can be implemented without some structural modification in the

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secondary school itself. While we await resolution of these matters, students will continue to be "dumped" into regular classrooms, as many teachers claim, or placed with teachers who have a reputation for working well with "low achievers." Mainstreaming will continue to be just another "add-on," regardless of whether what is tacked on is philosophically sound for the mainstreamed student. For the regular teacher, these "add-ons" mean additional meetings with special education personnel, additional inservice sessions, additional planning, and additional students—in what are already full classrooms.

Such an environment is bound to create frustrations for mainstreamed students, their parents, and their teachers. Students who are different become identified as "the problem"—they do not fit into a structure that demands conformity. Or regular teachers who do not comply with the regulations of P.L. 94-142 are viewed as "the problem"—they do not appear to have the flexibility to meet special education needs. Both kinds of criticism are misplaced because they ignore the fact that the teacher and the student are locked into the existing structure of the school, and it is this structure that creates the frustrations.

Although regular classroom teachers are not in a position to undertake major structural changes in the existing system, they *are* in a position to make structural changes in their own classrooms. Such changes can improve the educational prospects for handicapped students and reduce the frustrations teachers and students may feel.

Teachers need to find a compromise between uniformity and individualization. Not *everything* needs to be individualized for every student, or even for every mainstreamed student. Because real issues of time, numbers, curriculum, and evaluation seem to confound effective mainstreaming, they are the primary areas regular teachers must reassess in their own classrooms. They will need to ask what structural features of their own classrooms are preventing students with special needs from succeeding. In this way, regular classroom teachers can make an important contribution to creating an appropriate educational environment for mainstreamed handicapped students.

Educable Mentally Retarded

> Eighteen-year-old Arthur reads at the sixth-grade level and has difficulty with questions requiring abstract thought. Although he works hard, it takes him twice as long as his classmates to complete most assignments. In addition, Arthur will forget to study the material to be learned unless he is reminded several times. He also tends to need a lot of feedback to keep at his work; praise goes a long way for Arthur, and his work improves with constant prompting.

Arthur has several characteristics—slow work pace, limited conceptual ability, problems with reading, and the need for constant feedback—typical of a mainstreamed student who is labelled educable mentally retarded. By definition the characteristics most typical of mental retardation are limited intellectual ability and limited adaptive behaviors. Adaptive behavior here refers to the application of basic academic skills in daily-life activities, application of appropriate reasoning and judgment in mastery of the environment, and social skills. Other characteristics of educable mentally retarded students pertinent to the secondary school curriculum are limited attention span, memory, and ability to organize.

Some students labelled educable mentally retarded have experienced years of school failure; as a result, they may have poor self-concepts about their learning ability. Some might be able to complete an assignment, but the expectation of failure is so overpowering that they may not even attempt the task. The effect of being the class "dummy" may also act as a hindrance; many may not try for fear of embarrassment. In short, students with mental retardation will generally find it difficult to keep up with the secondary school learning environment that involves a demanding pace, multiple transitions from class to class, heavy emphasis on reading, and a need to synthesize a multitude of facts from lectures and reading.

Emotionally Disturbed/Behavior Disordered

> John, aged 14, sits in the back of the room and never says a word. When spoken to, he will whisper a one-word answer. He rarely

Characteristics of Handicapped Adolescents

For the most part, mildly handicapped adolescents who are mainstreamed differ in only small ways from their nonhandicapped peers. Yet, as any regular teacher knows, even subtle differences can set handicapped students apart from other students. In general, the regular teacher needs to be concerned about the characteristics that put the mainstreamed student at a disadvantage in completing the regular curriculum. This chapter will cover those characteristics in order to give regular teachers a basic understanding of the particular needs of mainstreamed students.

Not all students with disabilities are considered handicapped under P.L. 94-142. Only those students whose disability requires them to have special education and related services are thus labeled. A student can have a sensory impairment or physical disability, for example, without suffering any major problems in the regular classroom. When there is no educational disadvantage as a result of the disability, then there is no handicap in the legal sense.

For identification purposes, P.L. 94-142 categorizes handicapped students according to the particular educational needs resulting from the disabling condition. Following are categories of handicapped students frequently mainstreamed into regular classrooms at the secondary level. Under each category is a description of the characteristics that put the student at risk when in the regular classroom setting. The authors wish to point out that these descriptions are quite *general* and only highlight some of the main characteristics of each category. A given student will have a unique combination of characteristics, exhibiting some and not others, to different degrees and frequencies.

turns in work, and when he does, the writing is generally too small to decipher.

Cara, a large 15-year-old, has been suspended from school numerous times for swearing at teachers, smoking in the restrooms, and fighting. She is of above average intelligence but she tends to disrupt classes by verbally challenging the teacher's ability to teach, making jokes, and harrassing those students who are working.

Thirteen-year-old Kenny can't stay in his seat for more than five minutes. He has a tendency to giggle uncontrollably when called upon, make obnoxious noises when the teacher's back is turned, and steal his peers' assignments and work materials. When questioned about his behaviors, he always smiles and says that he loves school.

Each of these students has characteristics found in those students labeled emotionally disturbed or behavior disordered. Some, like John, exhibit shy or withdrawn behaviors. Others. like Cara, demonstrate behaviors commonly described as acting out or aggressive. Kenny's hyperactivity and impulsive actions are representative of what are usually called "immature " behaviors.

Emotionally disturbed students, by definition, exhibit maladaptive behaviors that interfere with learning. It should be noted that *all* students exhibit some of these behaviors on occasion. What distinguishes students with emotional impairments from their classmates is that their behaviors are intense and occur over an extended period of time.

The regular classroom teacher will most likely encounter a wide range of variance with regard to student behavior. Some students are undergoing transitory crises that adversely affect their behavior and in turn their classroom learning. Other students have a history of disordered behavior or emotional disturbances, which, most likely, are accompanied by school failure and poor social relationships.

It is often difficult for students with emotional impairments or behavior disorders to organize and control their academic and social behavior. It is difficult to motivate many of them to attend to the task at hand. In addition, poor relationships that have developed between them and teachers or other students often create blocks to effective learning.

Thus students with emotional disturbances will generally find it difficult to become motivated by a subject, to develop positive working relationships with teachers and peers, and to control their behavior as they move in and out of secondary classes.

Learning Disabled

> Connie, aged 16, has difficulty copying directions from the blackboard. She often omits words and occasionally copies entire lines out of sequence. Although she comprehends lecture material, it is difficult for her to complete the questions on the same topic at the back of the chapter in her textbook.
>
> David is of average intelligence but cannot pass math classes. He can't remember simple formulas and his calculations often get lost on the page. As a result of repeated failures, David refuses to attend his ninth-grade math class. When he is forced to attend, he rarely completes homework or exams. To his math teacher, David appears to be "just lazy."

A learning disability (see fastback #169, *Teaching the Learning Disabled*, for a thorough discussion of learning disabilities) is a disorder that manifests itself as difficulty in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling, or doing mathematical calculations. In addition, learning disabled students often fail to achieve at a level commensurate with their age and ability in at least one academic area. While the cases of Connie and David are different, both are representative of learning disabilities. Whereas Connie's limitation appears to be perceptual, David's may stem from a number of causes.

At the secondary level, one of the most common characteristics of learning disabled students is a history of school failure or poor school performance. This probably explains the low self-concept many learning disabled adolescents experience. In conjunction with a low self-concept, many learning disabled adolescents have developed traits that help them to cope with the threatening school environment. Such behaviors as boredom, nonparticipation, apathy, and lack of motivation are frequently used by these students to adapt to their environment. To them adapting is avoiding. Unfortunately, these very behaviors are perceived by teachers as signs of laziness or as a challenge to their authority.

Many learning disabled adolescents have difficulty with skills crucial to academic success in the typical secondary school curriculum. Since many have limitations in at least one perceptual modality, the primary mode of presentation, whether it be reading (visual) or lecture (auditory), and the primary response mode of writing may be problematic. The student is sometimes disorganized in study routines, cannot always think logically, and may have difficulty with memory. Limited listening skills and deficient comprehension and vocabulary usage in various subject areas may also hinder successful classroom performance. At the same time, social interaction may be stressful, as many learning disabled adolescents are often unable to recognize the impact their behavior has on others. In general, then, we can expect students with learning disabilities to be at a disadvantage in absorbing lectures, producing the required quality of written work, or remembering and sequencing material in the appropriate order.

Sensory Handicapped

> Carlos is 17 and will graduate at the end of next year. With corrective lenses he can see approximately one foot away, but only with great difficulty. Even though lectures are recorded for him, he still needs someone to read him written directions and to copy figures and diagrams from the blackboard.
>
> Tammy has worn a hearing aid for the last 12 years of her life. An excellent lip reader, Tammy is able to follow most of the lecture when sitting directly in front of the teacher. Her major weakness is in communication—often her words are unintelligible and occasionally she mistakes one spoken word for another.

Carlos and Tammy are examples of students with sensory handicaps. Sensory handicaps are impairments which, even with correction, adversely affect the student's educational performance. Regular teachers will find very few sensory impaired students mainstreamed into their classes, as their overall numbers are small.

At the secondary level the most critical accommodation that must be provided to sensory handicapped students is access to the curriculum via another mode of presentation (auditory and visual in the examples

above). Also, since students with sensory limitations often expend a great amount of energy just attending to the task, they may tire sooner than their nonhandicapped peers and need more time to complete work. Some students with vision or hearing impairments may have a less developed experiential base than their peers; and they may need additional experiences or input to conceptualize an idea. Students may also need to be directly cued as to where they should be working. Environmental factors such as noise level, movement patterns, and lighting may also have an effect on the student's ability to perform.

To sum up, we would expect to find students with sensory handicaps at a disadvantage when they are faced with an inappropriate instructional mode, a pace that is too fast, sensory-dependent conceptualizations, or environmental hindrances.

Physical Disability

> Franklin was seriously injured in an automobile accident at the age of 13. Prior to the accident he had been very athletic and popular. As a result of the accident, he lost the use of his right arm and hand and both legs. His writing is very slow and stiff. Usually, when the work is becoming too tiresome or stressful, he complains that his wheelchair is uncomfortable.

> Regina, a very intelligent 15-year-old, has cerebral palsy, which affects her ability to talk and move. At times her legs, arms, and mouth will move involuntarily. Regina is not self-conscious about her limitations and insists on participating with her peers in all classroom activities.

The physical disabilities represented in the above examples fall under the classification of orthopedically impaired. For students to be labeled as such, the impairment must adversely affect their academic performance.

Orthopedic handicaps usually do not inhibit learning if reasonable modifications can be made in the classroom environment to accommodate the physical disability. For students with limited mobility, the teacher may need to modify seating arrangements and the location of equipment. For students with motor-coordination problems, the teacher

may need to provide alternatives for such tasks as note-taking and prolonged writing assignments. In some cases, mental functioning may be somewhat impaired if the student is taking medication. In addition, orthopedically handicapped students may be absent frequently because of associated medical and health problems. In sum, then, we can expect that students with physical handicaps may have difficulty with architectural barriers, the pace of the regular curriculum, or activities requiring motor skills.

Summary

Most handicapped students placed in regular classrooms will not differ greatly from their nonhandicapped peers. Some with conceptual handicaps may work at a slower pace, may have a history of academic failure, and may have a more limited experiential background. Those with emotional handicaps may also have a history of academic failure, may exhibit less motivation for learning, and may display more behaviors that interfere with their ability to learn. Physically and sensory limited students may require the teacher to make some accommodations in the physical environment. Keep in mind that those who made the decision that the regular classroom is an appropriate educational setting took many factors into account and believe that the student will be able to achieve success.

Planning Instruction for Mainstreamed Students

Planning instruction for mainstreamed students takes place at two levels. First, there is planning by the team that develops the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for the student, which leads to the decision that the regular classroom is both an appropriate and the least restrictive environment for the handicapped student. Second, once a handicapped student has been integrated into a regular classroom, teachers must plan daily instruction appropriate to the student's needs. This chapter discusses the responsibilities of regular secondary teachers at both levels of planning.

Defining the Least Restrictive Environment at the Secondary Level

> Mr. Jones, a science teacher at Oak High School, has a reputation for individualizing instruction and for being flexible in his grading policy. At the beginning of the school year, he receives a memo indicating that a visually impaired student will be in his class this year. The memo also announces a meeting for regular teachers of mainstreamed students at which the special education teacher will provide some information about the problems mainstreamed students might have in regular classes.

The above situation typifies the procedures used in placing handicapped students in a secondary level class. This visually impaired student was probably placed in Mr. Jones's class because someone on the IEP placement team was aware of his flexible instructional methods and grading policies. If he is one of the few teachers at Oak High School

with this reputation, it is likely that many handicapped students will be placed in his classes, whether they are interested in science or not.

In practice, regular secondary teachers rarely attend IEP committee meetings, where the IEP goals and objectives are written for each student. They can, nevertheless, contribute by providing the IEP committee with detailed information concerning their content area and their classroom procedures. They can also advise the committee of the kinds of special services available that will help handicapped students succeed in their classrooms. And finally, regular teachers can help to write those IEP goals and objectives that are related to the regular curriculum. By combining information about the regular curriculum with its assessment of a student's strengths and weaknesses, the IEP committee can make decisions about placing a student in the least restrictive environment.

Planning Daily Instruction for Mainstreamed Students

Often a handicapped student will be mainstreamed into the regular classroom with no goals or objectives specific to that placement written in the IEP. Under these circumstances, regular teachers may find it necessary to make some modifications in *their own course objectives.* The place to begin is to study the information the IEP does provide concerning a student's strengths and weaknesses. For example, consider the following information that appears in the IEP of Jim, a tenth-grader who is being mainstreamed into regular classes.

Formal and Informal Assessment of Educational Performance:

Total reading — 6th grade level
Average range of intelligence

Student's Learning Characteristics:

Does not focus on one topic for very long
Does best when work is organized for him (study guides, outlines)
Works well one-to-one

Social Emotional Behaviors:

Poor self-concept

Low motivation
Inadequate interpersonal skills
Pressure in groups can result in silliness, giggling, etc.

Sensory and Motor Skills:
Some fine motor control problems

On a general level, the above information tells the social studies teacher that reading may be a problem for Jim. The physical education teacher will be alerted to the fact that unstructured group activities may prove troublesome. The math teacher may need to consider adjusting the length of assignments. Once Jim is placed in regular classes, moreover, his teachers may decide to make specific changes in their course objectives in terms of scope of content covered, behavior expected, conditions of instruction, and criteria for success.

Content. Varying the scope of content is one way regular teachers might alter a mainstreamed student's instructional program. In varying content, the teacher should first consider the prerequisite skills for a particular objective. For instance, the teacher who assigns a three-page paper for an English class assumes that the student has mastered the skill of writing complete sentences, can sequence thoughts in logical order to produce a coherent paragraph, and can, in general, communicate an idea in writing. To individualize an assignment for a student, the teacher may need to break the objective down into smaller parts, for example, writing paragraphs prior to writing a three-page theme. The student would still be working toward the same goal as are his or her classmates, but the scope of the content would have been varied.

Behavior. The particular behavior that the student is expected to exhibit may be varied when specifying objectives. Students at the secondary level are usually asked to demonstrate content mastery via one mode—writing. Yet there are a variety of ways students may demonstrate that they have learned the material. For instance, a student may be weak in writing, yet do very well when asked to explain verbally or through demonstration. Thus, should the objective specify the *behavior* of writing (e.g., Given X conditions, the student will *in writing* . . .), then the teacher may vary the behavior expected (e.g., Given X conditions, the student *will verbally* . . .). Note that the content of learning

has not changed; only the behavior designated to verify that the learning has taken place has changed.

Conditions. Teachers may choose to vary the set of conditions under which a learning objective is to be achieved. Consider the following objective:

> After listening to the tape-recorded lab instructions, the student will perform the experiment with no prompts with 100% accuracy within the 50-minute class period.

The teacher who knows that the student is a visual learner and has a specified learning weakness in the auditory mode can modify the objective for that student. In addition to listening to the tape, the student may also be expected to follow along with a written script or to observe someone demonstrate the experiment prior to attempting it alone.

Criterion. On a given objective, the criterion for success may also be varied. For a student working below average, the percentage of correct answers needed to achieve mastery on an objective may be decreased. Whereas the original objective may state that students are allowed a maximum of only two errors to succeed, a teacher may modify this to a maximum of four errors to succeed. Or a student may be asked to complete 20 sit-ups in the two-minute time limit as compared to the general requirement of 30.

Adapting the Curriculum for Mainstreamed Students

It's not that I don't want to individualize for these kids, but give me a break. With 30 students each period, textbooks and course content the school board says I must cover, and no aides or resources to pick up any of my other responsibilities, it's an impossible task.

Regular secondary teachers cannot be expected to remedy all the academic limitations of handicapped students. Nor should they be expected to redesign completely their curriculum for one student. However, many modifications can be made for handicapped students that are well within the capacity of regular secondary teachers.

A common problem for handicapped students at the secondary level is teachers' reliance on lecture and printed material to convey knowledge. One way of adapting the curriculum is to change the methods for how material is presented and practiced. Without in any way compromising their course content, teachers can develop strategies to help mainstreamed students learn. This chapter outlines three such strategies: 1) selecting appropriate materials, 2) adapting materials already in use, and 3) modifying instructional procedures to accommodate learner needs.

Selecting Appropriate Materials

To select appropriate teaching materials requires that the teacher analyze materials in terms of the learner's needs. Often a handicapped student is not succeeding at a task because of a mismatch between his or her particular limitations and the format of the instructional materials. By attending to the factors of readability, sensory modalities used, and

interest level of instructional materials, the regular classroom teacher can vary or adapt these materials to accommodate the learners.

Readability. For many mainstreamed students, the readability level of textbooks or other printed materials is too high. The learning disabled or educable mentally retarded student may want to do the work but cannot because of problems with decoding or comprehension. In selecting materials, make sure that the student is able to read them. Should the particular materials not specify a readability level, there are various techniques that teachers can use to quickly determine it: Cloze procedure, Maze technique, and Flesch scale. Regular teachers should use these techniques for all of their reading materials, including story problems in math, workbook directions for lab experiments, and how-to-do-it procedures in shop and home economics courses.

Use of sensory modalities. Regular students may have a preferred learning style, but most are capable of using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities to process information presented in the classroom. However, a handicapped student may be severely limited in at least one of the sensory modalities. For example, a student with a hearing impairment or an auditory processing difficulty may be able to understand the content of the lesson but unable to learn it when it is taught only in lecture (auditory) format. Similarly, a student with a visual impairment or visual memory disability will be at a disadvantage if all seat work must be copied from the blackboard. When selecting materials, the regular teacher should determine the handicapped student's preferred learning modality and then ensure that the basic or critical concepts are taught through it.

Interest level. The interest level of texts, books, and other teaching materials can often be the deciding factor in motivating an emotionally impaired, learning disabled, or educable mentally retarded student. Teachers need to match information about the learner, such as age, sex, and likes or dislikes, with the topics presented in teaching materials. For instance, adolescent boys who are interested in cars, motorcycles, and sports can be encouraged to work with materials (e.g., math kits, science experiments) that present problems in the context of these topics. The subject matter and illustrations of elementary-level textbooks are not acceptable to secondary students and should *not* be used.

Fortunately, several educational publishers are now marketing high interest-low vocabulary materials aimed at secondary students with low reading skills.

Adapting Materials

In many cases, depending on school district policy, regular teachers do not have the opportunity to select their major teaching materials. When faced with having to use materials that are inappropriate for the needs of certain students, teachers will have to adapt such materials.

Generally, content-area reading assignments present the most difficulty for mainstreamed students. For some learning disabled and educable mentally retarded students, the pace at which regular students are expected to read and comprehend assignments is inappropriate. Also, if a student is able to understand the text but reads at a slower rate due to a physical or sensory impairment, the teacher needs to allow additional time for assignments so that the student is not penalized. The teacher can break down assignments into smaller parts so that the student does not feel overwhelmed (e.g., read three pages each day rather than 15 for the week). The teacher can record textbook passages on audio tapes or peer tutors can read the material aloud directly to handicapped students, thus providing input to their preferred modality (in this case, auditory). The teacher may also reduce the amount of content reading but use other media, such as visual aids and filmstrips, as supplements.

Some mainstreamed students, particularly those characterized as emotionally impaired, learning disabled, and educable mentally retarded, have difficulty focusing on the major concepts to be learned from their instructional materials. A teacher can do several things to help these students with their comprehension. Presenting the key vocabulary words prior to reading and then highlighting or underlining those words in the text will aid word recognition. In math the arithmetic process to be performed can be highlighted by color coding signs or by placing only similar sign problems on the same page. Secondary teachers have found it useful to prepare study guides or outlines with the major points referenced to text pages or to annotate text margins with simple definitions for the key concepts. Others have found that writing re-

minders or hints on worksheets or in textbooks also facilitates understanding. For educable mentally retarded students who may not be able to read all of the assignment, such techniques enable them to grasp at least the major ideas. The same techniques also help learning disabled and emotionally disturbed students by providing them with a structure for focusing on the learning task.

Modifying Instruction

In addition to adapting materials, regular teachers may find that classroom instruction must be varied in order to meet the handicapped learner's needs. Handicapped students, like all students, benefit from teachers who use a variety of instructional techniques, such as inquiry methods, problem solving, role playing, and small-group work. In addition, teachers of mainstreamed students need to give special attention to the way they give directions and ask questions.

Even when teachers think they have given very clear directions, they are faced with raised hands and students asking, "What are we supposed to do?" By the end of the day, teachers virtually cringe at the thought of repeating the assignment one more time. Remember that many handicapped students frequently misunderstand directions or do not properly attend to them. For these students make your directions simple and concrete. Do not start giving directions until you have gained the attention of the students, either by direct eye contact or by some other signal. Keep directions to a minimum and avoid extraneous comments. It is often helpful to write the steps in sequence on the blackboard or to run them on a ditto master. Students can then check off each step completed. Such procedures increase the probability that students will follow directions.

Some mainstreamed students have difficulty answering questions asked in class or on written assignments. For the most part, educable mentally retarded and learning disabled students do well with recall questions but may have problems answering process and application questions that require higher cognitive levels. Teachers should be prepared to ask questions at various levels of difficulty in both written assignments and group discussions.

Putting It All Together

The following descriptions of adolescent mainstreamed students are accompanied by brief examples of what secondary teachers might do to accommodate their needs.

> Fifteen-year-old Tony is mainstreamed from the learning disabilities resource room into three regular class settings. Overall, Tony is polite, quiet, and tries very hard to complete his work. However, Tony's low reading level interferes with his performance, making it difficult for him to read the text and succeed on exams. Tony has not mastered the ability to write complete sentences or to use correct grammar. When verbally questioned about lecture content, Tony generally can answer appropriately.

Based on the above information, Tony's math teacher might consider assessing the reading level of story problems in the text and giving all directions verbally. In English class, the teacher might give Tony more time to complete reading assignments or assign a peer tutor to read the material aloud to him.

> Brenda is 17. She has been legally blind for 10 years but is able to read large type. She enjoys learning and achieves well. However, she becomes extremely anxious in situations where new material is being presented. When this occurs, she tends to ask a lot of questions, many of which are irrelevant to the topic at hand. When allowed to take unfinished work home, it is always successfully completed. Lately, her teachers are concerned that she wastes too much class time worrying about her ability to learn.

When planning instruction for Brenda, teachers would want to take into account her visual impairment and her emotional reaction when new material is presented. Teachers could relieve much of Brenda's anxiety by letting her know in advance what new material will be covered. For example, her science teacher could provide Brenda with a monthly calendar of topics along with the key concepts for each topic. Before a new lab experiment, the teacher could give Brenda an opportunity for kinesthetic learning by allowing her a few minutes to explore the apparatus. Before class lectures, the social studies teacher could give Brenda an outline of the major points to be covered. The math teacher could make available a tape recording of new math instruction.

Evaluating Mainstreamed Students

Students in the elementary school may receive only progress reports indicating satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance in selected subjects. However, the secondary school generally mandates letter grades for each course. In fact, in order to graduate, students may need to repeat courses in which they do not earn passing grades. Grade point averages (GPA) are computed at the end of each term and determine one's ranking in the class, admission to Honor Society, and, in some cases, eligibility for certain advanced courses. In addition, the GPA often determines whether a student is eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

P.L. 94-142 does not specify how the handicapped student who is mainstreamed into the regular classroom should be graded. As a matter of fact, few school districts have developed a grading policy specifically for mainstreamed students. The grading issue is further complicated by philosophical differences: Regular students are generally graded in terms of a minimum standard against which all students in the class are measured, whereas special education programs tend to set standards according to each student's individual needs. While controversy will persist on the issue of grading, teachers cannot wait for the final answer. They can begin by considering various ways to modify student evaluations in their own classrooms.

Ways of Modifying Classroom Evaluations

It is critical that students with handicaps be graded on their *abilities*, not their *disabilities*. Students with educational handicaps may be at a

disadvantage in the regular classroom as a result of a mismatch between their disabilities and traditional methods of evaluation. However, there are adaptations that a regular teacher can make to ensure that what a handicapped student has actually learned is evaluated.

For the student who reads well below grade level, a teacher could:

— Tape the instructions and questions for a test on an audio cassette.
— Use teacher aides, tutors, or other students to administer tests orally.
— Record unit summaries on tape cassettes for students to review.
— Correct for content only and not for spelling or writing problems.
— Underline the key words in test questions.

For the student who works at a slow pace because of physical limitations, a teacher could:

— Allow the student to take tests orally, using audio tapes.
— Permit the use of a typewriter in class for tests.
— Allow some flexibility in the amount of time given to complete tests and make adjustments if more time is needed.

For the student who has conceptual difficulties, the teacher may need to make more significant modifications. Some examples are:

— Use several items to test the major objectives in a unit.
— Cut down the number of objectives measured in a given test.
— Use objective tests rather than essay tests.
— Provide study guides to help the student focus on the main facts and concepts to be covered in the test.
— Provide the student with practice tests.
— Allow the student to recycle work in order to improve achievement.
— Allow students to take pretests that help them focus on the required material.

The above suggestions represent only a few of the many ways in which teachers can help increase the chances for student success on tests.

Individualizing Criteria

Regular teachers often face a grading dilemma when the criteria for achievement specified for the mainstreamed student are not the same as those specified for nonhandicapped students. However, before considering the issue of grades, the teacher should first ask *why* criteria have been modified for a particular student.

It is possible that criteria may have to be modified to *compensate* for the conditions of a testing situation. For example, a student with cerebral palsy, who writes with difficulty, would have problems with an in-class essay exam. A student with an auditory perceptual limitation would have problems taking a timed typing test from dictation. Both students may have mastered the required skill or content, but the teacher must modify the criteria for these students' success in order to compensate for the inappropriate testing conditions.

If the modified criteria are related to the *behavior* that a student is being asked to produce, then the teacher must ask if the student (given his or her unique characteristics) can reasonably be expected to complete the task. For instance, a student who is in the tenth grade but reading somewhere near the fifth-grade level could not be expected to make sense of story problems on an in-class math exam that are written at the tenth-grade level. In this example, the student has not mastered the prerequisite skill, i.e., reading at the appropriate level, to solve the story problems. Thus the student may be expected to complete only the problems on the exam that require computation.

Criteria may also be modified for students who cannot produce the required behavior because they lack the necessary *cognitive ability*. In other words, if a student has conceptual difficulty with the content, he or she may not be able to master the course material at the required level. In this case, the student may be expected to complete only those aspects of the assignment that require a lower level of conceptualization (e.g., the student is asked to list the contributions made by famous scientists rather than to analyze their significance; or the student is asked to describe the setting of a novel rather than discuss the setting's symbolic meaning).

Typically, a wide variance of conceptual abilities will exist among students in a class; therefore, teachers must consider the ability levels of all their students when determining appropriate testing material. However, if a student is consistently failing on the conceptual aspects of required tasks, the teacher may need to reconsider the appropriateness of the given setting for meeting IEP objectives and to request that the IEP committee reconvene.

Independent Variables that Affect Grading

When determining grades, teachers often take into consideration variables other than those directly related to the evaluation of task performance. A familiar example is the teacher who informs students that classroom participation will be a factor in grading borderline cases, or the teacher who automatically assigns lower grades to late papers. In the case of mainstreamed students, teachers may consider several different variables. For example, some secondary teachers emphasize such factors as effort put forth, improvement over the semester, and whether the student needs the course to graduate.

It is possible, however, that a student's handicapping characteristic may cause the teacher to develop a negative attitude toward that student's academic potential. For example, a student who is dysgraphic (a disability affecting the ability to produce legible writing) may be penalized for producing "sloppy" work; or, a student who is behaviorally disordered may receive a poor grade on an essay because the teacher thinks the topic chosen by the student "disgusting."

If teachers place undue emphasis on the effects of a particular handicapping condition or on certain undesirable personality characteristics, they may be unable to evaluate objectively a student's academic performance. It is crucial for teachers to become aware of their biases in order to ensure that extraneous variables do not unduly influence their grading practices.

P.L. 94-142 and Minimum Competency Testing for Graduation

Increasingly, states and local school districts are requiring that secondary students pass minimum competency tests in order to receive high

school diplomas. This trend toward so-called "competency-based exit" (CBE) tests is intended to ensure that graduating high school seniors have mastered certain basic skills considered necessary for adult life.

The demand that a minimum graduation standard be applied to all high school students raises certain questions when placed in the context of P.L. 94-142. For example, how accountable will regular secondary teachers be for the instruction of mainstreamed students? Currently, regular teachers may be expected to provide remedial instruction for students who fail minimum competency tests. Also, some states are now requiring that IEP goals and objectives relate more closely to mandated minimum competencies. Regular teachers may therefore be partially responsible for "teaching" those competencies to their mainstreamed students. However, the extent to which teachers can be held accountable for students' failure on exams after initial or remedial instruction is still an open question.

Regular Teachers and Special Educators: A Collaborative Team

Mary, a learning disabled tenth-grader, has been mainstreamed into Ms. Brown's math class. Mary likes going to math class and has many friends there. Ms. Brown believes that Mary is learning in her class, even though she has not been able to achieve the minimum requirements for a passing grade. Ms. Brown has questions about the implications of Mary's learning disability for math learning. She is also concerned about how to grade Mary's work. On the other hand, Mr. Green the learning disabilities resource room teacher, now questions the soundness of the decision to place Mary in Ms. Brown's class. Mr. Green also has questions about the type of support he can provide to help Mary achieve more success in math class.

Mary's situation raises questions that are particular to the mainstreaming process at the secondary level. Though some kind of collaboration between the two teachers is in order, neither individual is quite sure how to go about it. On a practical level the question is how to find time to meet during the hectic secondary school day. On a more fundamental level, the question of "ownership" arises. Who really has the major responsibility for Mary's education? Mr. Green probably thinks that Ms. Brown has the major responsibility for Mary's math education, while Ms. Brown views Mr. Green as ultimately responsible, because of Mary's "special education" label.

Mainstreaming: A Transitional Experience

One way to address this problem of role confusion is to view mainstreaming as a *transitional* experience in which regular and special educators share responsibility for certain students' educational pro-

grams. This shared responsibility is particularly important at the secondary level, because both regular and special educators have areas of expertise which, when combined, will benefit mainstreamed students. Regular teachers' expertise consists of knowledge of the content area and an understanding of instructional strategies, curriculum materials, and course requirements in the regular curriculum. Special educators' expertise lies in awareness of the educational implications of different handicapping conditions and of the instructional techniques that have proven effective with specific students.

Once the concepts of a transitional experience and shared ownership have been established, practical procedures for effective collaboration can be initiated. Anecdotes such as the ones below illustrate how regular secondary teachers' roles can be expanded to include collaborating, facilitating instructional planning, and monitoring academic progress.

A tenth grade biology teacher asks:

> "What kinds of information about my courses will be most helpful to an IEP committee? Do they want a list of objectives, a description of my instructional strategies, or information about my grading policies?

This science teacher's question raises an important distinction between discussing the problems of a *particular* student and the limitations or requirements of a *particular* regular classroom. It is important that regular teachers pinpoint areas in their curriculum where handicapped students tend to have difficulty. Curriculum options and limitations can be generically explored, which will assist special personnel with placement and program decisions. In this way, the process of collaboration becomes an ongoing one, rather than one motivated by a particular student's problem.

A ninth grade English teacher says:

> Marietta, a visually impaired student in my class, needs to have tests and materials read aloud to her. In addition, she needs to be presented with learning materials that primarily require oral responses. I don't have time to make the special arrangements for this every time we begin a new unit of study.

After checking with the special education teacher, the English teacher might find that other regular teachers in the school have mainstreamed

students. Some of those students also might have disabilities that make it difficult for them to receive and produce written information. It would be helpful if the English teacher could team with other regular educators to modify classroom materials which could then be used with more than one student. For example, English teachers might schedule their short story units at different times so that the modified materials could be circulated among the different sections. Or math teachers might collectively identify those students needing help and trade off the responsibility for tutorial sessions. Also, tests and other classroom materials that have been modified can be used again if they are preserved (e.g., laminated). Files or collections of modified materials could then be accumulated and used as the need arises, without regular teachers having to "reinvent the wheel" for subsequent mainstreamed students.

A tenth grade math teacher remarks:

> I know that Mick is getting some help in the resource room, but I wonder if the resource room teacher knows that Mick has been handing in his homework assignments late, and that they are full of errors. I wish I had some way of communicating with the resource room teacher, as I never seem to find time to talk with her, and we need to discuss ways of helping Mick.

In the above example of shared ownership, some form of regular written communication might be one way in which regular and special education teachers could jointly monitor Mick's progress. For example, the math teacher could send to the special education teacher a biweekly short form that describes assignments and tests that Mick will be expected to complete. To avoid the problem described in the anecdote, there could be space on the form to indicate if a student is showing poor work habits or is consistently having difficulty with certain basic skills. The special education teacher can then work with the student to strengthen areas of weakness.

In summary, strong working relationships with other professionals require time and effort. Mainstreaming is a difficult experience for both teachers and students. However, teachers can consider their time well spent if their effort makes the difference between a handicapped student's success or failure in the regular classroom.

Conclusion

These are times of great hope for secondary educators and their mainstreamed handicapped students. In "least restrictive environment," we have an issue that teachers themselves—and not the courts or legislatures—are uniquely qualified to resolve. And for once it appears that teachers themselves will get a chance to resolve the issue. With their superior content expertise and understanding of the regular classroom, secondary educators will be able to define clearly "least restrictive environment," and to create the learning situations that will allow handicapped students to master secondary level subjects. With secondary teachers themselves now taking the lead, handicapped students' prospects for a good regular education have never been better.

As has been suggested in this fastback, regular secondary teachers *can* successfully meet the needs of handicapped students—and they *will* accomplish this as they add to their already extensive knowledge and skills. Moreover, regular teachers need not "go it alone," as they increasingly will be able to share certain planning and instructional responsibilities with fellow teachers and administrators. Regular secondary educators will soon find that they and their colleagues are the true experts on the education of secondary mainstreamed students. They are the vanguard that assures that education received by mainstreamed students is of the same high quality as that now received by regular students.

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